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THE MAN OF TWO STORIES.

ABOUT the commencement of the present century, nothing was to be heard of but wars and rumours of wars. Every town and village was filled with soldiers; nearly one half of the population appeared to be dressed in the garments and trappings of war. Bonaparte was striding like a giant over the kingdoms of the Continent, and subjecting powers and principalities to his sway. Victory followed his footsteps wherever he went, and in the pride of his heart he threatened to invade our "tight little island." The tidings of this intended invasion filled us with dismay—our hearts died within us; we were a "nation of shopkeepers," and we shook in our shoes for very fear. But in a little time a "change came o'er the spirit of our dream;" we plucked up a little spirit; we remembered the deeds of our forefathers, and determined to acquit ourselves like men. The press, the platform, and the pulpit rang with appeals to our patriotism and love of country. A reaction took place; despondency gave way to determination; every man began to wax valiant, and professed his resolution to buckle on the weapons of war, and march forth to do battle against Bonaparte, and all and sundry who would dare to invade our borders.

Besides our regular army, every county had its militia marshalled in battle array; then there were local militias, and gentlemen volunteers, and yeomanry, and pikemen, and we know not what all beside. Nothing was to be seen but marching and countermarching, drilling and exercising; and nothing was to be heard but the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets and bugles. The war-mania seemed to have seized the whole male population. The description of the prophet of old was altogether reversed: instead of men beating their swords into pruning-hooks, they were beating their pruning-hooks into swords. Men who had been hitherto diligent in business, leading quiet and peaceable lives, such as country lawyers, small and great manufacturers, bustling little merchants, and thriving publicans, turned their backs with contempt upon their respective avocations, and rushed forth sword in hand, to fight "for their loves and their land." Teachers, who had all their lives been employed in "teaching the young idea how to shoot," left that pleasing task for the more exciting one of shooting our "natural enemies." Even the tailors, those useful and sorely-slandered fragments of humanity, forsook the cutting of clothes for the more noble employment of cutting down their country's enemies. "The pomp and circumstance of glorious war," as a matter of course, soon infected the "rising generation." Little boys and big boys might be observed practising their brass cannons in lanes and bye- corners, to the great terror and dismay of the elder portion of the fair sex, who were grievously disturbed by these juvenile cannonites. In short, no one could walk along the streets without seeing bands of curly-headed urchins, with paper cocked-hats, wooden swords, and generally a red pocket-handkerchief stuck upon a stick as a flag, marching in regular ranks, with much military swagger, to the martial music which one of their number contrived to extract from a decayed tea-kettle strung round his neck, by beating it lustily with two sticks. We ourselves, in our early days, had the honour of com-

manding such a regiment; we were called to this high and responsible post by the united voices of our companions in arms. On that occasion we made our "maiden-speech," which was received with loud and repeated cheers by the officers and men whom we commanded. We acquired considerable fame, from the efficient state in which we kept our corps, and the ready and regular manner in which they went through their various and complicated evolutions. Like all great men, however, we became the object of envy: one of our companions began to look with an evil eye upon us; we had the felicity of having a real military feather in our cap, and a genuine brass gorget hanging at our breast. He could not endure to see us in such gorgeous array; the feather and gorget haunted him wherever he went; the spirit of envy took possession of his heart; he pined and panted for the possession of power. In a short time he deserted our ranks, and raised an opposition regiment, which he had the audacity to call the "Invincibles." With this regiment we had several desperate conflicts; but we at last gained a complete victory over them, having forced them to lay down their arms, and sue for quarter.

From what we have stated, our readers will perceive that we were early imbued with the love of arms. At the commencement of the present century, our hearts beat high with aspirations after military glory. The spirit of the times came over us; we were determined not to be outdone in patriotism by our fellows, nor to lag behind in the hour of our country's peril; we therefore boldly entered into a militia regiment, then raising in the west of Scotland, firmly resolved to drain the last drop of—wine in our glass, in drinking destruction to our enemies.

The officers of this renowned regiment formed a curious medley of strange figures and strange faces; many of them were, in truth, odd fish. Some of them were little, red-faced, pot-bellied merchants, who had been unfortunate in business; others were lawyers who could never get into business; two or three were bankrupt manufacturers, who had contrived to "do" their creditors; and not a few belonged to that numerous class of young men of talent who belong to no profession. Such were the materials of which our "brother officers" were composed. Amongst them were certainly some very strange and amusing specimens of humanity; one of them we shall take the liberty to introduce to our readers as "the man of two stories."

Lieutenant Gilman was a fat, double-chinned, little man, with a rubicund face, and small, twinkling, grey eyes. He was a native of Glasgow, or of the city of "Rum Punch," as he was wont facetiously to term that great emporium of cotton goods. For many years he practised the calling of an auctioneer, and contrived, by dint of prudence and economy, to scrape together a few hundred pounds. Being somewhat ambitious (as most little men are), he determined to leave off auctioneering—to turn his back on the little ivory hammer, with which he had knocked down so many cheap lots to the good folks of Glasgow—and become a gentleman. He had heard say that all officers were gentlemen, so he determined to become an officer, and consequently a gentleman. His ambition was soon gratified; through the interest of a Glasgow badie—or "cotton-lord," as our friend the lieutenant used

facetiously to call his patron,—he got a lieutenantancy in the regiment to which we belonged. His name appeared in the Gazette in the usual manner—"John Gilman, gentleman, to be lieutenant," &c. There was his name, and surname, and rank, at full length; and above and beyond all, the important fact was announced to the world that he was a gentleman. This was worth living for—this was fame! It was chronicled in legible type, in the columns of a Glasgow newspaper, and his name would be transmitted down to posterity. He was now, beyond all cavil or controversy, a gentleman—a whole gentleman—and nothing but a gentleman. The little man rubbed his hands for very joy to think how the good folks in the Salt-market would stare with astonishment, to see it blazoned forth in the public prints that their old crony and convivial companion had become all at once an officer and a gentleman.

Though the worthy auctioneer had his ambition gratified by becoming a militia officer, nature certainly never intended him for the profession of arms. He was a good-natured, quiet, little, social man, who preferred mirth to marching, and who loved hot rappers rather than hot fighting. He would at any time have rather knocked down chattels than men, and would much sooner have volunteered to cut his way into the heart of a goose-pie than into the heart of a besieged fortress. At the mess-table there were many of us who waxed very valiant after dinner; and some, in the pride of their hearts; asserted that nothing would give them more satisfaction than to have a brush with the French. On these occasions the little, double-chinned lieutenant sipped his wine in silence, and said nothing. We do not mean to insinuate that our little friend was a coward—far from it; but we do believe that he was by no means excessively anxious to enter into mortal combat with the French, or any other nation. He was fond of the pleasures of the table, and loved, above all things, to laugh and luxuriate over a tumbler of rum-punch. This was his favourite beverage; and when he joined the mess, he made a proposition that the officers who belonged to the "Western Luminary"—by which term he was wont, in his convivial hour, to denominate Glasgow—should be allowed to imbibe their accustomed potation. This proposal was, however, at once knocked on the head by the colonel, who asserted that they would disgrace the regiment, and forfeit the character of gentlemen, if they drank rum-punch at the mess. It was all very well, he said, for mercantile men and "cotton-lords" to swill rum-punch, but it would not do for gentlemen of the army, holding his majesty's commission, to be guilty of such a breach of decorum. For his part, he would not be a party to letting down the dignity of the regiment; the eyes of the world were upon them; he was determined that port, and nothing but port, should be drunk at the mess; port was the drink of gentlemen—the drinking of port, in fact, of itself constituted a gentleman—there was no denying that. The moment a man betook himself to the drinking of rum-punch, or any such liquor, he at once lost caste, and ceased to be a gentleman. As the little lieutenant was determined at all hazards to be a gentleman, he quietly submitted to drink port, though it was at once disagreeable to his palate and detrimental to his purse.

This drinking of port-wine was a sore annoyance to the worthy lieutenant for many weeks; but he at length got gradually accustomed to the liquor, and soon began to laugh and joke, and tell his two stories with as much glee as he used to do amongst his boon-companions in the Salt-market, when he lived under the rum-punch regime.

The lieutenant was a man possessed of a fertile imagination, and though he had never travelled into distant countries, he had the quality which is said to be claimed and possessed by travellers, of

drawing a pretty considerable long-bow occasionally. He used frequently to perpetrate a pun, and had a great store of very odd anecdotes, and strange proverbs, which it would have done Sancho Panza's heart good to have heard; but he had only two stories, properly so called. Canning's Knife-grinder had no story to tell; but in the matter of stories the lieutenant had fairly the better of the knife-grinder, for he had two, but only two—viz. the "Leg of Mutton" and the "Captain and his Bones."

Every one who knew the lieutenant had heard him tell these two stories again and again, but no one ever heard him tell a third; the thing was utterly impossible—he was emphatically a man of two stories. The lieutenant was not an old man, and he was not liable to that almost universal infirmity incident to old men, of boring their friends to death with musty old stories, which they have heard hundreds of times. He was guiltless, or nearly so, of this sort of social persecution which old men wage against the peace of society; but whenever he fell in with a stranger, either at the mess or elsewhere, it would go hard with him if he allowed him to depart without narrating to him one or both of his stories. He seemed to lie in wait, and watch the words of strangers at the mess, with the intent of finding some circumstance or allusion which would justify and excuse him in introducing one of his stories. If the stranger gentleman mentioned anything about sheep, or wool, or turnips, or caper-sauce, or anything that had the most distant relation to mutton, he was sure to take advantage of it as a pretext and plea for telling his story.

"Why, sir," he would say, taking a sip of his wine, and rubbing his chin in a pleasant insinuating manner, "your talking about our national dish, sheep's head, brings to my recollection a very strange circumstance which occurred to myself connected with a leg of mutton. You must know, sir, many years ago, I happened to have some business to transact with a very extensive merchant in Paisley. He was a very great man, and had I do not know how many weavers working for him. Like the generality of the Paisley people, he was very hospitable. After our business was settled, he invited me in a courteous manner to take "pot-luck" with him; to which I agreed. Accordingly, I went to his house at the hour appointed, and was introduced to his wife, to whom he had been but lately married; who made a lengthened apology to me about the poorness of the dinner, which she said was to consist only of a leg of boiled mutton. I told her (which was true) that there was nothing which I liked so well as boiled mutton; that I lived constantly upon it; that I preferred it to veal, or venison, or beef, or bacon, or any other thing; that, in short, I was a regular out-and-out mutton-eater. This confession of my mutton-loving propensities seemed greatly to comfort the lady, who expressed her happiness at having, by mere accident, in the mere course of pot-luck, a dish of which I was so fond. We soon after proceeded to the dining-room, and took our seats at the table. Mine host lifted the cover from off the ashet, and my eyes rested upon one of the finest legs of mutton which I ever beheld. It was no ordinary leg of mutton, sir—it was a very large leg of mutton, indeed;—in fact, sir, you may think I am using the language of exaggeration, but I solemnly assure you, on the honour of an officer and a gentleman, that it was as large as a leg of veal!—and, what was most extraordinary, there was not a single drop of gravy about it—there was not a single trace of liquid on the ashet; all was as dry as that table; but it did not long continue so. No sooner did my friend put his knife into the leg of mutton, than the gravy gushed out in torrents—yes, sir, it gushed out in torrents—it was a perfect flood of gravy! In a minute the ashet was full, and the next moment the rich red liquid was flowing over the edge of the ashet upon the table-cloth; the table-cloth was soon com-

pletely saturated, and the gravy began to drop from its edges upon the carpet. Sir, I have heard of many strange things, and I have seen not a few strange things myself, but that leg of mutton beat them all hollow. How the leg could contain such an immense quantity of juice is a thing that quite baffles my comprehension. I am not naturally superstitious; but, sir, I have long been of opinion that there was something supernatural about that leg of mutton!"

The lieutenant's other story was respecting a certain recruiting officer, who, according to our friend's account of the matter, created quite a sensation in the house where he lodged, by his strange conduct in regard to his bones. This story was certainly every whit as marvellous as that concerning the leg of mutton, and he generally contrived to introduce it in the same insinuating way.

"Why, sir," he would say, "your amusing story of the little doctor being such an expert hand at polishing a bone, brings to my mind a very strange story respecting bones. I was residing, many years ago, for the benefit of sea-bathing, in the 'honest town of Musselburgh,' as it was called, a small quiet village a few miles east from the Scottish metropolis. I lodged with a Mrs. M'Carkale, a stout, jolly-looking woman, 'fat, fair, and forty,' who kept a shop, and let lodgings. Her household consisted of herself, her husband, a little dumpy girl of a daughter, the servant, and a sagacious-looking grey cat, called Tibby. While I resided with her, a recruiting party came to the village, and the officer took up his abode in the house of my landlady. He was a tall, lean, lantern-jawed man, who spoke little, but who ate like a very voracious man. My landlady was astonished to see such a lean man eat so much, and yet grow no fatter; but before he had been many weeks in her house she had still more cause for astonishment; she could not comprehend what the officer did with his bones; not with his own bones, recollect, but with the bones of the meat which was sent to his table. She, of course, naturally expected that the meat on the bones would be eaten, either in whole or in part; but she as naturally expected that she would afterwards see the bones—but no bones were to be seen. One day, shortly after the officer came to Mrs. M'Carkale's, he ordered mutton-chops and fish to dinner; after dinner, when the servant brought away the plates, &c. from the officer's room, her mistress inquired for the fish-bones, as she wished to give them to the cat of whom I have already made honourable mention. The surprise of Mrs. M'Carkale may be easily conceived, when her handmaiden assured her that there were no bones on the officer's plates! A thought suddenly struck my landlady; perhaps the cat had stolen into the officer's room while he was at dinner, and he had given Tibby the bones of the defunct fish. This solution of the difficulty was, however, soon shown to be unsatisfactory; for it was proved, beyond all dispute, that Tibby had been dwelling in the 'land of Nod' all the time that the officer had been discussing his dinner. A few days after, the officer had a roast fowl to dinner. The mysterious disappearance of the fish-bones, coupled with two or three similar circumstances, had awakened Mrs. M'Carkale's curiosity;—surely the bones of the fowl would not be involved in the same inexplicable mystery! But she was mistaken; when the servant-girl went to remove the officer's dinner-things, not a vestige of a bone was to be seen! Mrs. M'Carkale did not know what to think! the thing was utterly beyond her comprehension! What could the gentleman have done with the bones? Next week, the officer had a sheep's head to dinner; and, strange to say, the same thing occurred—no bones were to be seen. Mrs. M'Carkale was confounded; she was driven to her wit's end. There was something prodigiously mysterious in the disappearance of the bones. She now began to think that the servant-girl was playing a trick upon her, and con-

cealing the bones, in order to surprise her; she therefore resolved to remove the officer's dinner-things herself, in order, if possible, to get at the bottom of this mystery; but she was unsuccessful. She did, indeed, frequently remove her lodger's dinner-things, but never could she set her eyes upon a single fragment of a bone. She could find out no clue to lead her to the bones—the thing was beyond the depth of her philosophy; it was a riddle which she could not read—a knot which she could not untie. At the end, as at the commencement of her cogitations, the same question presented itself—what, in the name of mystery, can the gentleman do with the bones? If he had had a dog, then it might have been inferred that the officer gave him the bones; though this conjecture would have supposed an aptitude in the dog for masticating beef-bones, which very few dogs possess: but the gentleman had no dog. Had it been winter, it might have been concluded that the officer had thrown the bones into the fire: but it was summer, and there was, of course, no fire into which to throw the bones. Surely, thought Mrs. M'Carkale, the man would never throw the bones under the sofa or under the bed! it was possible, but certainly not probable, that he would do such an absurd thing; but there was no saying—these military men were strange shavers, and often did very absurd things. She made a diligent search under the sofa and bed, but no bones were to be seen. I need not say the officer and the bones became the principal, all-absorbing subject of conversation in the family. Master, mistress, maid, and daughter cogitated, and conjectured, and speculated concerning the bones; but all to no purpose—the more they thought about the bones, the more dark and mysterious did the subject become. It was most teasing—it would have provoked a saint. Poor Mrs. M'Carkale's mind was so fretted and fatigued with thinking about the bones, that her health began visibly to decline. She felt deeply mortified that she could not penetrate the mystery; the more so, because nothing before had ever baffled the prying perseverance of her inquisitive spirit. She could not endure the thought of being completely beat and baffled by the bones; but they did, indeed, both beat and baffle her. The officer left her house at the end of three months; and from that day to this Mrs. M'Carkale could never find out what on earth the officer did with the bones."

These were the lieutenant's two stories. We do not insist on our readers believing them; they may do so or not, just as they feel inclined. As to ourselves, we never put implicit faith in them—we ever had a lurking suspicion that they were somewhat apocryphal. But no matter—they were good stories; and the little double-chinned lieutenant told them in such a pleasant, plausible, cool, calm, matter-of-fact manner, that it did one's heart good to listen to him. Many years—many more than we like to think of—have passed away since we heard the little lieutenant tell his two stories. We still think we see him seated at the mess-table, with earnest and important face, holding some stranger, like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, in fascination, by the recital of one or other of his two stories. The lieutenant related these two stories so frequently, that we are persuaded he himself was firmly persuaded of their truth: not that we mean to assert that he made them, as the phrase goes, "out of his own head." On the contrary, we know he had some foundation for them; he did once at dinner meet with a more than ordinary juicy leg of mutton; and on one occasion he certainly did fall in with an eccentric, half-witted sort of an officer, who made away with his bones in a very mysterious manner, merely to astonish the natives. These formed the foundations for his two stories; but being possessed of a very glowing and vivid imagination, he raised on them a splendid superstructure.

THE STOUT GENTLEMAN.

A STAGE-COACH ROMANCE.

It was a rainy Sunday in the gloomy month of November. I had been detained, in the course of a journey, by a slight indisposition, from which I was recovering; but I was still feverish, and was obliged to keep within doors all day, in an inn of the small town of Derby. A wet Sunday in a country inn—whoever has had the luck to experience one can alone judge of my situation. The rain pattered against the casements; the bells tolled for church with a melancholy sound. I went to the windows in quest of something to amuse the eye; but it seemed as if I had been placed completely out of the reach of all amusement. The windows of my bedroom looked out among tiled roofs and stacks of chimneys, while those of my sitting-room commanded a full view of the stable-yard. I know of nothing more calculated to make a man sick of this world than a stable-yard on a rainy day. The place was littered with straw that had been kicked about by travellers and stable-boys. In one corner was a stagnant pool of water surrounding an island of muck; there were several half-drowned fowls crowded together under a cart, among which was a miserable crest-fallen cock, drenched out of all life and spirit, his drooping tail matted, as it were, into a single feather, along which the water trickled from his back: near the cart was a half-dozing cow, chewing the cud, and standing patiently to be rained on, with wreaths of vapour rising from her reeking hide; a wall-eyed horse, tired of the loneliness of the stable, was poking his spectral head out of a window, with the rain dripping on it from the eaves; an unhappy cur, chained to a dog-house hard by, uttered something every now and then between a bark and a yelp; a drab of a kitchen wench tramped backwards and forwards through the yard in pattens, looking as sulky as the weather itself: everything, in short, was comfortless and forlorn, excepting a crew of hard-drinking ducks, assembled like boon companions round a puddle, and making a riotous noise over their liquor.

I was lonely and listless, and wanted amusement. My room soon became insupportable: I abandoned it, and sought what is technically called the travellers' room. This is a public room set apart at most inns for the accommodation of a class of wayfarers, called travellers, or riders; a kind of commercial knights-errant, who are incessantly scouring the kingdom in gigs, on horseback, or by coach. They are the only successors that I know of, at the present day, to the knights-errant of yore. They lead the same kind of roving, adventurous life, only changing the lance for a driving-whip, the buckler for a pattern-card, and the coat of mail for an upper benjamin. Instead of vindicating the charms of peerless beauty, they rove about, spreading the fame and standing of some substantial tradesman or manufacturer, and are ready at any time to bargain in his name; it being the fashion now-a-days to trade instead of fight with one another. As the room of the hostel, in the good old fighting times, would be hung round at night with the armour of way-worn warriors—such as coats of mail, falchions, and yawning helmets; so the travellers' room is garnished with the harnessing of their successors—with box-coats, whips of all kinds, spurs, gaiters, and oilcloth-covered hats.

I was in hopes of finding some of these worthies to talk with, but was disappointed. There were, indeed, two or three in the room; but I could make nothing of them. One was just finishing his breakfast, quarrelling with his bread and butter, and huffing the waiter; another buttoned on a pair of gaiters, with many execrations at Boots for not having cleaned his shoes well; a third sat drumming on the table with his fingers, and looking at the rain as it streamed down the window-glass: they all appeared infected

with the weather, and disappeared, one after the other, without exchanging a word.

I sauntered to the window, and stood gazing at the people picking their way to church, with petticoats hoisted mid-leg high, and dripping umbrellas. The bell ceased to toll, and the streets became silent. I then amused myself with watching the daughters of a tradesman opposite, who, being confined to the house for fear of wetting their Sunday finery, played off their charms at the front windows to fascinate the chance tenants at the inn. They at length were summoned away by a vigilant, vinegar-faced mother, and I had nothing further from without to amuse me.

What was I to do to pass away the long-lived day? I was sadly nervous and lonely, and everything about an inn seems calculated to make a dull day ten times duller: old newspapers, smelling of beer and tobacco-smoke, and which I had already read half-a-dozen times; good-for-nothing books, that were worse than rainy weather. I bored myself to death with an old volume of the *Lady's Magazine*. I read all the common-place names of ambitious travellers scrawled on the panes of glass; the eternal families of the Smiths, and the Browns, and the Jacksons, and the Johnsons, and all the other -sons; and I deciphered several scraps of fatiguing inn-window poetry, which I have met with in all parts of the world.

The day continued lowering and gloomy; the slovenly, ragged, spongy clouds drifted heavily along; there was no variety even in the rain: it was one dull, continued, monotonous patter, patter, except that now and then I was enlivened by the idea of a brisk shower, from the rattling of the drops upon a passing umbrella.

It was quite refreshing (if I may be allowed a hackneyed phrase of the day) when, in the course of the morning, a horn blew, and a stage-coach whirled through the street, with outside passengers stuck all over it, cowering under cotton umbrellas, and seethed together, and reeking with the steams of wet box-coats and upper benjamins. The sound brought out from their lurking places a crew of vagabond boys and vagabond dogs, and the carrot-headed hostler, and that nondescript animal yclept Boots, and all the other vagabond race that infest the purlieus of an inn. But the bustle was transient; the coach again whirled on its way; and boy and dog, and hostler and Boots, all slunk back again to their holes; the street again became silent, and the rain continued to rain on. In fact, there was no hope of its clearing up: the barometer pointed to rainy weather; mine hostess's tortoise-shell cat sat by the fire, washing her face, and rubbing her paws over her ears; and on referring to the almanack, I found a direful prediction spreading from the top of the page to the bottom, through the whole month, "Expect—much—rain—about—this—time."

I was dreadfully hipped. The hours seemed as if they would never creep by. The very ticking of the clock became irksome. At length the stillness of the house was interrupted by the ringing of a bell. Shortly after, I heard the voice of a waiter at the bar, "The stout gentleman in No. 13 wants his breakfast. Tea and bread and butter, with ham and eggs; the eggs not to be too much done." In such a situation as mine every incident was of importance. Here was a subject of speculation presented to my mind and ample exercise for my imagination. I am prone to paint pictures to myself, and on this occasion I had some materials to work upon. Had the guest up-stairs been mentioned as Mr. Smith, or Mr. Brown, or Mr. Jackson, or merely as "the gentleman in No. 13," it would have been a perfect blank to me; I should have thought nothing of it: but "the stout gentleman!"—the very name had something in it of the picturesque. It at once gave the size; it embodied the personage to my mind's eye, and my fancy

did the rest. He was stout, or as some term it, lusty; in all probability, therefore, he was advanced in life, some people expanding as they grow old. By his breakfasting rather late, and in his own room, he must be a man accustomed to live at his ease, and above the necessity of early rising; no doubt a round, rosy, lusty, old gentleman.

There was another violent ringing; the stout gentleman was impatient for his breakfast. He was evidently a man of importance, "well to do in the world," accustomed to be promptly waited upon, of a keen appetite, and a little cross when hungry. "Perhaps," thought I, "he may be some London alderman; or who knows but he may be a member of parliament."

The breakfast was sent up, and there was a short interval of silence; he was doubtless making the tea. Presently there was a violent ringing, and before it could be answered, another ringing still more violent. "Bless me! what a choleric old gentleman!" The waiter came down in a huff. The butter was rancid, the eggs were overdone, the ham too salt. The stout gentleman was evidently nice in his eating; one of those who eat and growl, and keep the waiter on the trot, and live in a state militant with the household. The hostess got into a fume. I should observe that she was a brisk, coquettish woman; a little of a shrew, and something of a slammerkin, but very pretty withal; with a nincompoop for a husband, as shrews are apt to have. She rated the servants roundly for their negligence in sending up so bad a breakfast, but said not a word against the stout gentleman; by which I clearly perceived that he must be a man of consequence, entitled to make a noise, and to give trouble at a country inn. Other eggs and ham, and bread and butter, were sent up: they appeared to be more graciously received—at least there was no further complaint. I had not made many turns about the travellers' room, when there was another ringing. Shortly afterwards there was a stir and an inquest about the house; the stout gentleman wanted the Times or Chronicle newspaper. I set him down, therefore, for a whig; or rather, from his being so absolute and lordly where he had a chance, I suspected him of being a radical.

My curiosity began to be awakened. I inquired of the waiter who was this stout gentleman that was making all this stir; but I could get no information. Nobody seemed to know his name. The landlords of bustling inns seldom trouble their heads about the names or occupations of transient guests. The colour of the coat, the shape or size of the person, is enough to suggest a travelling name. It is either the tall gentleman or the short gentleman, or the gentleman in black, or the gentleman in snuff-colour, or (as in the present instance) the stout gentleman: a designation of the kind once hit on answers every purpose, and saves all further inquiry.

Rain—rain—rain! pitiless, ceaseless rain! No such thing as putting a foot out of doors, and no occupation or amusement within. By-and-by I heard some one walking over head. It was in the stout gentleman's room. He evidently was a large man, by the heaviness of his tread; and an old man, from his wearing such creaking soles. "He is doubtless," thought I, "some rich old squaretoes, of regular habits, and is now taking exercise after breakfast."

I had to go to work at this picture again, and paint him entirely different. I now set him down for one of those stout gentlemen that are frequently met with, swaggering about the doors of country inns: moist, merry fellows, in Belcher handkerchiefs, whose bulk is a little assisted by malt liquors; men who have seen the world, and been sworn at Highgate, who are used to tavern-life, up to all the tricks of tapsters, and knowing in the ways of sinful publicans: free livers on a small scale, who are prodigal within the compass

of a guinea; who call all the waiters by name, touse the maids, gossip with the landlady at the bar, and prose over a pint of port or a glass of negus after dinner.

The morning wore away in forming of these and similar surmises. As fast as I wove one system of belief, some movement of the unknown would completely overthrow it, and throw all my thoughts again into confusion. Such are the solitary operations of a feverish mind. I was, as I have said, extremely nervous; and the continual meditation on the concerns of this invisible personage began to have its effect. Dinner-time came. I hoped the stout gentleman might dine in the travellers' room, and that I might at length get a view of his person; but no, he had dinner served in his own room. What could be the meaning of this solitude and mystery? He could not be a radical; there was something too aristocratical in thus keeping himself apart from the rest of the world, and condemning himself to his own dull company through a rainy day. And then, too, he lived too well for a discontented politician. He seemed to expatiate on a variety of dishes, and to sit over his wine like a jolly friend of good living. Indeed, my doubts on this head were soon at an end; for he could not have finished his first bottle before I could faintly hear him humming a tune, and, on listening, I found it to be "God save the King." 'Twas plain, then, he was no radical, but a faithful subject; one that grew loyal over his bottle, and was ready to stand by king and constitution when he could stand by nothing else.—But who could he be? My conjectures began to run wild. Was he not some person of distinction travelling incog? "Who knows?" said I, at my wit's end; "it may be one of the royal family, for aught I know, for they are all stout gentlemen!"

The weather continued rainy. The mysterious unknown kept his room, and, as far as I could judge, his chair, for I did not hear him move. In the mean time, as the day advanced, the travellers' room began to be frequented. Some, who had just arrived, came in buttoned up in box-coats; others came home who had been dispersed about the town. Some took their dinners, and some their tea. Had I been in a different mood, I should have found entertainment in studying this peculiar class of men. There were two, especially, who were regular wags of the road, and up to all the standing jokes of travellers. They had a thousand sly things to say to the waiting-maid, whom they called Louisa and Ethelinda, and a dozen other fine names, changing the name every time, and chuckling amazingly at their own waggy. My mind, however, had become completely engrossed by the stout gentleman. He had kept my fancy in chase during a long day, and it was not now to be diverted from the scent.

The evening gradually wore away; the travellers read the papers two or three times over; some drew round the fire, and told long stories about their horses, about their adventures, their overturns and breakings down. They discussed the credit of different merchants and different inns; and the two wags told several choice anecdotes of pretty chambermaids and landladies. All this passed as they were quietly taking what they called their nightcaps—that is to say, strong glasses of brandy and water and sugar, or some other mixture of the kind; after which they, one after another, rang for Boots and the chambermaid, and walked off to bed in old shoes cut down into marvellously uncomfortable slippers. There was only one man left—a short-legged, long-bodied, plethoric fellow, with a very large, sandy head. He sat by himself, with a glass of port-wine negus and a spoon, sipping and stirring, and meditating and sipping, until nothing was left but the spoon. He gradually fell asleep, but upright in his chair, with the empty glass standing before him; and the candle seemed to fall asleep too, for the wick grew long, and black, and cabbaged at the end, and dim-

med the little light that remained in the chamber. The gloom that now prevailed was contagious. Around hung the shapeless and almost spectral box-coats of the travellers, long since buried in deep sleep. I only heard the ticking of the clock, with the deep-drawn breathings of the sleeping toper, and the drippings of the rain—drop, drop, drop—from the eaves of the house. The church-bells chimed midnight. All at once the stout gentleman began to walk over-head, pacing slowly backwards and forwards. There was something extremely awful in all this, especially to one in my state of nerves: these ghastly great-coats, these guttural breathings, and the creaking footsteps of this mysterious gentleman. His steps grew fainter and fainter, and at length died away. I could bear it no longer. I was wound up to the desperation of a hero of romance. "Be he who or what he may," said I to myself, "I'll have a sight of him!" I seized a chamber-candle, and hurried up to No. 13. The door stood ajar. I hesitated—I entered. The room was deserted. There stood a large broad-bottomed elbow-chair at a table, on which was an empty tumbler and a Times newspaper; and the room smelt powerfully of Stilton cheese. The mysterious stranger had evidently just retired. I turned off, sorely disappointed, to my room, which had been changed to the front of the house. As I went along the corridor, I saw a large pair of boots, with dirty, waxed tops, standing at the door of a bedchamber. They doubtless belonged to the unknown; but it would not do to disturb so redoubtable a person in his den. He might discharge a pistol, or something worse, at my head. I went to bed, therefore, and lay awake half the night in a terribly nervous state, and, even when I fell asleep, I was still haunted by the idea of the stout gentleman and his wax-topped boots.

I slept rather late the next morning, and was awakened by some stir or bustle in the house, which I could not at first comprehend, until, getting more awake, I found there was a mail-coach starting from the door. Suddenly there was a cry from below, "The gentlemen has forgotten his umbrella! Look for the gentleman's umbrella in No. 13!" I heard an immediate scampering of a chambermaid along the passage, and a shrill reply as she ran, "Here it is! here's the gentleman's umbrella!" The mysterious stranger was, then, on the point of setting off. This was the only chance I could ever have of knowing him. I sprang out of bed, scrambled to the window, snatched aside the curtains, and just caught a glimpse at the rear of a person getting in at the coach-door. The skirts of a brown coat parted behind, and gave me a full view of the broad disk of a pair of drab breeches. The door closed; "All right!" was the word; the coach whirled off; and that was all I ever saw of the stout gentleman.—WASHINGTON IRVING.

**AFFECTING LETTER OF DR. SOUTHEY TO MR. WILBERFORCE,
ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON.**

THEY only who know me in my daily habits can imagine or believe how great has been my loss, or how it is possible that a child of ten years should have been so entirely the companion as well as pupil of his father. I was recovering my Greek in the process of teaching Herbert; we were learning German together; and were to have begun Saxon in the same manner, as soon as the "Saxon Chronicle" should have been published. For his age, there was no better Latin scholar; in Greek he was fit for the fifth form in Westminster; and he was acquiring, with little expense of time and no trouble, the French and Spanish. With all these acquirements going on, his life was like a continued holiday, so much was it his disposition and mine to mingle sport with study, and find recreation in all things. He was the constant companion of my walks, and felt as much interest in my pleasures as I did in his. His disposition was as beautiful as his intellect, and therefore

I had ever an ominous apprehension that he was not intended to grow up on earth, where it was not possible that his nature could be improved, and but too certain that it must in some degree be sullied. The feeling which thus prepared me for this privation had not been without its use in enabling me to submit to it with resignation. I hope and believe that I have borne this affliction as it becomes a Christian. The stoicism which I endeavoured to practise in youth (and not without signal benefit) might have supported, but it could not have consoled me. My heart is weaned from the world, and the brightest spot in the prospect before me is where the light from heaven shines upon the grave. Yet do not imagine that I give way to sorrow, or indulge in vain retrospects and guilty regret. "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" Never were these words pronounced with more heartfelt sincerity than when I repeated them in the most painful scenes and moments of my life. I am thankful for the abundant blessings which I still possess; but, above all things, most thankful for having possessed a son whom I loved so entirely, who was so entirely worthy to be loved, and whom I shall one day rejoice.

THE OLD LAWYER.

IN the neighbourhood of where I lived last year, I often remarked a tall, thin, old man, who excited my curiosity a good deal. He was shabbily and slovenly dressed, and I thought, from his appearance, a little dissipated; yet there was something about him, particularly in the ruffled shirt which he sported—remnant of an extinct fashion!—that impressed me with the idea of his being rather a superior sort of person; one who had once stood higher in the world than he did now.

Impressed with this idea, I made inquiries about him, and found that his name was Peterkin, and that he was an old lawyer; that he had long since abandoned his profession, and was now living on a small annuity from some professional fund; that he was unmarried; that he lived in a house by himself; and that he appeared to be lost sight of by all his kindred, as neither friend nor acquaintance ever visited him. I found, in short, that he was one of these solitary beings, who, having outlived the race to which they may be said properly to have belonged, and who, unable to keep up with the younger and fresher generations that press on, have stepped out of the crowded ranks of life, and now hover on their line of march, detached and disregarded stragglers; beings who are still in the world, but who can scarcely be said to be of it.

In all this part of the history of the old lawyer, however, there was nothing particularly interesting, nor very remarkable; but there was something remarkable, and curious too, in a certain circumstance connected with his peculiarities. This was the anxious and miserly care with which he tended and watched over a hoard, not of gold, but of bundles of old professional papers, of which he had an enormous accumulation, an entire room-full. These papers, all relating to affairs in which he had been employed many, many long years since, and which were now of no earthly interest or value to any human being but himself, were brown with age, and the writing in many cases all but illegible; for many of them had passed through the hands of several generations of lawyers before they had come to his; they were the litigated processes of centuries. They would, too, have been covered with dust, but for the old man's watchful and tender care of them. Every now and then he went amongst them, took them down bundle by bundle, and with gentle hand, and almost reverential look, carefully dusted them, read over their titles for the ten thousandth time, and replaced them in their former situation.

To this employment the solitary old man devoted entire days; and entire days, too, he spent in untying and tying the bundles,

and in refreshing his memory with their contents. For hours together would he pore over these musty documents, finding in their barbarous technicalities, dull formalities, and professional samenesses, matter of deeper interest than he could find in the finest work of imagination that ever was written.

The old lawyer's enormous accumulations of papers were, as already said, of course perfectly useless to any living being. They were mere lumber; for they related to affairs long since forgotten—to parties long since in their graves. No one but himself, in fact, would have given them house-room; but for him they possessed a deep interest—to him they were of inestimable value; he would not part with one of these brown bundles for its weight in gold; he would not have one of them torn, or otherwise injured, for a year's annuity. He kept them under lock and key, in a room which he had appropriated to that purpose, and would allow no soul but himself to enter that room, much less to touch one of the sacred bundles of which it was the sacred depository.

By-and-by the old lawyer came to change his residence. It was a curious affair. In the removal of his old-fashioned, dilapidated furniture, he took no interest whatever; leaving this part of the business entirely in the hands of those whom he had employed for the occasion. He did not seem to care what became of them, or how they were disposed of; all his concern was for the papers, and to their safety and careful removal was his whole attention directed; he carried them tenderly and affectionately in arms-full down stairs himself—for he would allow no one else to touch them—and deposited them in the cart that was waiting for them in the street.

Oh! it was a day of dreadful uneasiness and agitation to him! The door of the sacred depository of his beloved papers stood wide open; it must necessarily be so on such an occasion—it could not be avoided. People were going about—strangers! They might enter the room; they might toss the papers about in such a way that he could never arrange them again—never again be able to find out any particular paper he might want. Nay, they might steal them—they might carry some of them off; they might carry off the whole budget of papers relating to the great case of Lord Litigant and the heirs of the estates of Grindewood, 1754; or the interesting process, *Nicodemus Nogginus versus Walter Brodie 1763*; or any other set of equally curious and important documents. The thought was death! Yet he could not be everywhere at once; he could not, at the same time, watch over the papers already deposited in the cart, and those yet remaining in the room—it was impossible. He was (for we witnessed it) in a state of great tribulation; his anxious and earnest countenance bespoke it;—his hurried, breathless words bespoke it;—his unwonted activity, his running backwards and forwards, his restlessness, all indicated the excessive agitation and uneasiness he was labouring under. At length away went the cart and the papers—oh, these papers!—and away with them, his eye riveted on the cart as he followed close behind it, went Mr. Peterkin; he would not have lost sight of his treasure for a moment for the world.

From this time, for several months, I neither saw nor heard more of Mr. Peterkin or his papers; and in the mean time I also had removed to another house.

I had been about the period above mentioned in my new residence (whose back-windows, by the way, looked into a large area, formed by ranges of other buildings,) when my three youngest children rushed tumultuously one day into my sitting-room screaming delightedly, "Papa, papa! The papers, the papers! Peterkin, Peterkin, Peterkin!" They had made a discovery—they had perceived, at an open window across the area, a huge pile of dusky papers, which they had at once concluded must be

Peterkin's; for they had often seen his enormous accumulations in the old house, and knew both him and his papers well. Under the impression just stated, the youngsters had watched the window for some time, when, to their great joy, Peterkin himself appeared. He presented himself with a cloth, or towel, in one hand, and a bundle of papers in the other, which he was carefully dusting.

By a curious chance, the old lawyer has taken up his abode in a house whose back-windows are directly opposite ours, so that we can now see his every movement; and what of these relates to his papers are curious enough.

Every now and then he takes a dusting-day of them; we see him distinctly. On these days, he first throws the window-sash as high as it will go, and then commences operations; these operations consisting in his coming to the window every two or three minutes, with a bundle of his dusky-brown papers in each hand, which, stretched at arm's-length out at the window, he strikes vigorously and repeatedly together, (and they are so firmly tied that they emit a sound like boards—I can hear the clap distinctly from where I sit,) to knock the dust out of them; and out of them, to be sure, the dust comes in small clouds or puffs. He then retires from the window to restore them to their places, and anon appears with another pair of bundles; and so on he goes for hours together, until he has gone through the whole lot.

But, besides dusting them, he frequently suns and airs them; and at the moment I am writing this, there is a row of them on the sills of each of his two windows, undergoing this refreshing process. These will be withdrawn towards the afternoon, and be replaced by another series, until the entire stock has had the benefit of an airing.

Through the open window—always open, by the way, for the purpose, we presume, of admitting a free circulation of air to the papers—we can also distinctly discern the dusky walls of the huge piles of the latter that are built up round and round the apartment.

Although certainly bordering on the absurd or the ludicrous, there is yet, I think, something a little touching in the poor old lawyer's interest in his papers—in the care and fondness with which he tends and watches over them. I can—and so can the reader, I have no doubt—readily conceive and understand the feeling that attaches him to these memorials of other days—of those days when he was an active, well-known, and respected member of his profession. Alas! how changed his condition now! how changed all and everything around him! His writing chambers used to be thronged with clients, who put every faith in his integrity and ability; and the cheerful bustle of business, of which he was himself the life and soul, kept stirring around him from morning to night. Now, no one calls upon him, no one comes to consult or employ him; his threshold is never crossed by other feet than his own; no one breaks in upon his solitude. His residence, his very existence, is unknown; his name is blotted from the record of the living world, struck out of the roll of active and useful men.

The apartment that contains the old man's heaps of dingy papers contains all that remains to him of his professional trials and triumphs. No wonder he should look upon them with interest. What recollections they must summon up! what views of departed hopes and fears, when he musingly cons over their titles, or, with more earnest purpose, sits down to a perusal of their contents!—Who but the old man himself can tell what are his thoughts, his feelings, on such occasions as these?

Nor can the poor old lawyer's dusky masses of papers themselves be looked on with entire indifference, when one reflects on the interest they once possessed for those who have been long in their graves; when we look upon them as records of struggles long past

and forgotten; when we reflect on the withering anxieties, the joyous hopes, of which they were once the source! Doing all this, we may still smile at the contemplation of the old man and his papers, but it cannot be without some touches of a better and a finer feeling.

AMELIA.

It was a fine day in the month of October, 18—, when Alfred Montgomery (then on a visit to his uncle, an eminent merchant residing in the city of York), set out to stroll as far as Bishopthorpe, the seat of the venerable and respected archbishop of the province. His route lay through fields which had been lately covered with standing corn, and had now assumed the hue of autumn. On his left waved the majestic elms that decorate the magnificent walk which runs by the river Ouse for nearly two miles, and is the finest terrace-walk in the kingdom; their leaves shone in the rays of the autumnal sun like burnished gold; behind him rose the towers of that majestic temple, York Minster, perhaps the most elaborate Gothic structure in England; whilst in front, the palace of Bishopthorpe, rearing its head above the plantations in which it appeared to be enveloped, closed the scene. Alfred had a heart not insensible to the beauties of nature, and he paused to gaze on the surrounding objects with feelings of admiration and delight. He had just taken out his pencil to make a sketch of the venerable cathedral as it appeared in the distance, rising like a giant above the pigmy edifices by which it is surrounded, when a wild shriek burst upon his ear. It came from the high road which skirted the fields; and in an instant he leaped the hedge, and looked round to discover what it was that had alarmed him. A little way down the road, he saw two ruffians employed in rifling a female, who was extended on the ground; and though armed only with a stick, he rushed to her rescue. The villains fled at his approach; for the guilty are generally cowards. Alfred then turned his attention to the fainting form of the female whom they had quitted. She was seemingly not more than eighteen; and though terror had blanched her cheek, yet it was evident that she possessed considerable personal attractions. Alfred raised her in his arms, and fortunately the terrified girl soon gave signs of returning animation; for my hero would have been at a loss how to proceed, if her insensibility had continued. Opening her eyes, she cast them on the ingenuous countenance of her young deliverer.

"Am I safe?" she murmured in soft accents.

"You have now nothing to fear; yet, as soon as you are able, we had better leave this spot, lest the villains who have escaped should return."

"Oh, let us go now!" she exclaimed, raising herself from his arms; "I am quite recovered—I can walk home now."

"You will allow me to attend you—I cannot think of trusting you alone," said Alfred: a proposition which was readily assented to by his fair companion; and they proceeded towards the cottage of her aunt, which she informed him was situated at only a short distance.

Arrived at the cottage of Mrs. Mildmay, Alfred was overwhelmed with the thanks of that lady for the service which he had rendered her niece; and he received them with a manly ingenuousness which strongly recommended him to the notice of both. His connexions were not unknown to Mrs. Mildmay, and during his stay in York he frequently repeated his visits; and when he departed for the metropolis, he carried with him the assurance that the heart of the lovely Amelia Mildmay was wholly his.

Alfred had some difficulty in tearing himself from the spot in

which all his hopes and wishes centred; but the commands of his father were imperative. Sir James Montgomery was the head of an ancient house, and he looked to his son as one who was destined to perpetuate its honours. Alfred well knew that his father would never consent to his union with the orphan and portionless daughter of a country surgeon—for such Amelia was,—however amiable or however accomplished; and he obeyed his summons with a foreboding dread of much evil that was to come, but with a firm determination to withstand all efforts to induce him to break the vows he had pledged to Amelia. But Alfred knew not his own heart: he depended too much on the strength and stability of his affections, and they deceived him.

Sir James had heard from his brother-in-law, Mr. Lawrence, with whom Alfred had been staying at York, that his son had formed an attachment to a young lady who had nothing to recommend her but beauty, amiable disposition, and extensive accomplishments; which latter were bestowed upon her by a doting father, who, when in prosperity, with a lucrative profession, and the fair prospect of leaving the image of his regretted wife an ample if not an affluent provision, spared no expense in procuring her the most eminent masters; and Amelia did honour to their care. Adversity, however, soon blighted all the hopes of Mr. Mildmay, and he died a martyr to despair, leaving his child to the protection of the wife of his deceased brother, who had for six years supplied the place of her parents with an affection which Amelia dutifully repaid. Thus, though Miss Mildmay would have graced a ducal coronet, yet the want of high birth (that of fortune would have been no object) prevented Sir James Montgomery, who looked upon the *penchant* of the young people as a mere childish passion, from receiving her as his daughter.

Arrived at his father's splendid mansion in Grosvenor-square, Alfred found a large party assembled to enjoy the festive gaieties of a "winter in London." At first he entered into the scenes of splendid dissipation in which he was immersed with reluctance, and his heart reverted to the banks of the Ouse and the lovely Amelia; but soon (such is the influence of bright eyes and fine forms) he joined in them with a degree of pleasure which was unaccountable to himself, but which a judge of poor human nature would have found no difficulty in tracing to the right cause. The fact was, Alfred, though gifted with many excellent qualities, inherited no small share of his father's family pride. The seeds of vanity also were thickly strewn in his composition, and strangely marred his otherwise amiable disposition. The heir of Sir James Montgomery's title and fortune, he was of course an object of desire to all the disengaged young ladies, whose mammas or other relatives were on terms of intimacy with the family; and many were the snares laid to entrap his affections. Some of these were so palpable, that they failed through their own grossness; but others were more delicately managed, and whilst the vanity of the young man was flattered on the one hand, his interest was excited on the other. For the honour of that sex which Heaven, in pity to man, sent

"to cheer

The fitful struggles of our passage here,"

I must add, that those females who were so anxiously striving to win the youthful heir were few in number; and that even of those, not one, I verily believe, would have endeavoured to captivate his affections, if they had known that a lovely fair one, to whom he had plighted his vows, was pining in secret for him.

In a few months Alfred almost ceased to remember that such a being as Amelia Mildmay existed. His days were devoted to the society of a number of dashing young fellows, who contrived to kill time at the clubs and other places of fashionable resort; his

nights to the opera, the theatres, or Almack's, to splendid routs, fascinating balls, or scientific *conversazioni*. At every turn he was assailed by the blandishments of flattery; on all sides he was the object of the most assiduous attentions from the rich, and the young, and the beautiful. Is it wonderful, then, that his heart became entangled? Is it wonderful that the quiet, unobtrusive qualities of Amelia were forgotten amidst the glare, and pretensions, and fascinations of a London fashionable life? I offer no apology for his infidelity; I state facts, and lament that truth compels me to record the defection of Alfred Montgomery from his vows.

But how passed this time with Amelia? At first, with hope for her companion, she looked forward to future happiness as certain, and dwelt with delight upon the prospect of wedded bliss. But conscience interfered to damp these pleasing anticipations. She had concealed from her aunt, at Alfred's request, the fact of a mutual engagement having taken place between them, and her heart bitterly smote her with having practised duplicity in regard to this revered relative. She soon, however, set her conscience at rest, by telling Mrs. Mildmay the whole little history of her guileless bosom: and a gentle chiding was the only reprimand which that kind and affectionate woman could bring herself to bestow on the lovely girl, who looked up to her for forgiveness and protection. Her self-approbation thus restored, Amelia anticipated with eager anxiety the receipt of a letter from town. It came, and was worded in language as ardent as her own feelings, as pure as her own imaginings. Under the sanction of her aunt, she replied to this first love-epistle she had ever received: and such an effect had the few artless lines she penned upon Montgomery, that he absented himself from a gay party made on purpose for him, in order to answer it. The next letter he received he thought less interesting, but replied immediately. After the third he suffered a longer period to elapse; a still longer after the fourth; and to her fifth epistle it was such an interval before any answer was received, that Amelia's heart was filled with foreboding fears: and when it arrived, it was so cold, so distant, so reserved, it breathed so much of the language of prudence, and so little of that of love, that all those fears were confirmed. Still, not even to her aunt would she whisper a suspicion of Alfred's truth; though the conviction that he no longer loved—at least not as she did, with a pure, devoted, undivided attachment—preyed upon her spirits, robbed her cheeks of their bloom and her eyes of their lustre; and the once gay and animated Amelia was now only the shadow of her former self.

While this amiable girl was thus lamenting the faithlessness of her absent lover, that lover was entangled in the snares which ambition and inclination entwined to captivate him. The Hon. Louisa Montague was the daughter of the gallant admiral of that name; and the two families of Montgomery and Montague were upon the most intimate terms with each other. Louisa loved; and she was besides ambitious of gaining one for whom so many females were contending. She assiduously paid court to Alfred, but in so delicate a manner that she never betrayed her doing so. She appealed to him on every disputed point; she chose her books by his direction; sang those songs and played those pieces of music which he approved; occasionally a beautiful bouquet, arranged by her hand, was presented to the youth; a purse was netted for him; and a thousand other bewitching little *agrémens* displayed, which women know so well how to call into action, and which are so seductive in their effects upon those whom they are intended to charm. Alfred by degrees found Miss Montague's society almost necessary to his existence; he was her escort to the park, her attendant at the opera, her partner at the ball; and one

morning, having called upon her to inquire after her health, as she had not been at Montgomery House all the preceding day—honour and Amelia being both forgotten—he made her an offer of his hand and fortune, and was accepted.

No sooner, however, had that magic word which crowns the hopes of a true lover passed the lips of the fair Louisa, than the thoughts of Amelia recurred to Alfred's breast. "He started like a guilty thing;" his colour changed; and he sank into a chair that happened to be close beside him. To the anxious inquiries of Louisa he returned the most incoherent answers, and at length rushed from her presence in a state of mind which would have demanded pity, had it not been brought on by his own forgetfulness of what was due to the confiding girl who had bestowed her heart on him. He flew to solitude, but reflection maddened him; and he then resorted to society, but nothing could quiet the agitation of his mind. Had he confessed to Louisa the exact state of his heart, all might have still been well; for she was a noble-minded girl, though her amiable qualities were partially obscured by her ambition. But his pride would not allow him to acknowledge that he had acted with duplicity, that he had professed to love her when his heart was devoted to another; and he finally resolved to abide by the event of the morning, and to forget, if possible, Bishophorpe and Amelia Mildmay.

Both the families received the intelligence of Alfred's offer to Louisa Montague with joy, and immediate preparations were made for the marriage. Alfred wrote one hurried note to Amelia, to intimate that she must prepare her mind to hear of a change; and then he gave himself up to the fascinations of his betrothed. Eager to get rid of the agonising thoughts which would intrude, and hoping he should feel more easy when it had become his duty to love and honour Louisa as his wife, he was anxious for the day which should unite them. Before that day arrived, he had totally forgotten Amelia; and when he led Louisa to the altar, not one thought of her disturbed his bosom. Such is man! and such, too frequently, is man's love! It rages with violence for a time; but absence cools the flame, and too often totally extinguishes it, even when the object possesses every qualification which can reflect honour on his choice.

The newspapers informed Amelia of the marriage of Alfred, and the next day she disappeared from the cottage of her aunt, whose most anxious inquiries could obtain no tidings of her. It would be vain to describe her anguish; she loved Amelia as her child, and when two days had elapsed, and no intelligence was received of the fugitive, she was laid on the bed of sickness, caused by anxiety for the fate, and exertion to discover the retreat, of her beloved niece.

Alfred and his wife departed, as soon as the marriage ceremony was performed, for a seat belonging to Sir James Montgomery, situated in the most beautiful part of Devonshire. There, blest in each other's society, the days flew swiftly away, and time seemed to have added new pinions to his wings—so short seemed the hours as they passed. But this was happiness too exquisite to be of long duration. On the tenth day of their residence at Chilton House, Louisa was walking on the lawn in front of the building, equipped for riding, and waiting for Alfred, who was to accompany her to take a view of some picturesque objects in the neighbourhood. Suddenly her attention was excited by a female, who, with agitated step and a wild and distracted mien, approached and surveyed her with a piercing eye, in which the fire of insanity was clearly to be distinguished. She spoke not, but gazed anxiously and steadfastly on Louisa, who shrunk from the close inspection, and yet seemed rooted to the spot, as if deprived of the power to move. Suddenly the figure approached nearer

and passing her hand across the fair brow of Mrs. Montgomery, she put aside the ringlets which overshadowed it, and exclaimed, after the pause of perhaps a minute,

"Are you his wife? But no!" the fair maniac (for such she was) continued, "he is dying; his faith was plighted to me—you can have nothing to do with my Alfred!"

What an agonising moment was this for Louisa! She saw before her one who had been deceived by the man to whom she had plighted her vows, and whose reason had fallen a sacrifice to her base and unnatural desertion. What a thought for a doting wife!—for a proud one, too, who would never have accepted a divided heart, or been contented with a share only of her husband's affection! But perhaps there might be some mistake; she would try.

"What Alfred do you mean, my poor woman?" she asked, in a tone of sympathy.

"Why, my own Alfred—Alfred Montgomery—him for whom I twined this wreath: but the flowers are faded now—so, methinks, is his love, for it is a long while since I have heard from him!" She took a wreath of flowers from her bosom as she spoke, and pressing it to her lips, presented it to Mrs. Montgomery. "See," she cried, "these are the flowers he used to love! I plucked them from my own bower, that bower which Alfred decorated. But I cannot give it to you—no, I must keep it for Alfred.—Alfred!" she exclaimed, in a loud and piercing voice, "where art thou, Alfred?" Then adding in a lower and plaintive tone, "they told me he was married, but I would not believe it. I wandered through wind and through rain, through brake and through briar, till I reached his home: there they told me too that he was married. Still I would not believe it: I followed him here, for is he not mine?—what right, then, have you here?"

Amelia (for it was indeed that lost, unhappy girl) now seized Louisa wildly by the hand: she uttered a piercing shriek, and the well-known voice reached the ear of her husband; he was instantly by her side, eager to see what had occurred to alarm her. But what a sight met his eyes! He beheld his newly-married wife supported by her maid, who had also heard her shriek, pale and inanimate, the picture of death; whilst at her feet lay the lovely being whom he had made wretched. How she came there he was at a loss to conjecture; and not knowing what had passed between her and his wife, he was equally at a loss how to act. Before he could recall his scattered ideas, and resolve on what was to be done, Amelia raised herself from the ground, and catching his eye, she sprang up, and clinging to him, she exclaimed, "He is here! he is mine! Oh, Alfred, they told me you were married—that you had ceased to love me! but I would not believe that you could slight the heart which beats only for you! Feel!" and she took his hand, and placed it on her bosom, "how it flutters, poor thing!—it will soon be still. Alfred, I am dying!" and her voice suddenly assumed a rational and composed tone, "I know not what I have said, what I have done; I have wandered I know not where or how; but—but—" She struggled to articulate something more, but nature was exhausted; she heaved one sigh, dropped her head on his bosom, and expired.

Whilst this scene was passing, the servant had conveyed Louisa into the house, whither Alfred followed with his lifeless burden, almost as unconscious as the form he bore. He laid the corpse on a sofa in the parlour; he threw himself by the side of it, and called upon his Amelia once more to live for love and him. Then the recollection of his wife flashed across his mind; he rose, and throwing himself into a chair, covered his face with his handkerchief, and sobbed convulsively. This paroxysm over, he became rather calmer, and sought Louisa, who had retired to her chamber. To her he gave a full explanation of his acquaintance with Amelia,

and pleaded so effectually for forgiveness, that it was soon granted. But a sting was planted in his heart, which time could never remove. In the midst of all that fortune could bestow, and blessed with happiness seemingly beyond the lot of humanity, the remembrance of Amelia always intruded in the hours of retirement; it was the canker-worm which robbed his nights of repose, his days of happiness; and he lived a memorable instance of splendid misery. His wife's lot was more happy, for to her he was an attentive and affectionate husband; and at his death, which took place about a year after his marriage, her grief was sincere and heartfelt. She had numerous offers of marriage, but rejected them all, faithful to the memory of him who, as her first, she was determined should be her only love.

It remains, however, to be explained how Amelia reached Devonshire. She knew Alfred's residence in town, from the address of his letters; and from the servants at Montgomery House it was ascertained that a female, who answered her description, had been inquiring for him a few days after the bridal party left town. On being told that he was gone to Chilton with his bride, she made no reply, but rushed out of the hall. It appeared that a stage-coach had set her down at an inn near the seat of Montgomery; but whether she had travelled in that manner all the way from London, or whether part of the journey had been performed on foot, was never known; most probably, from the state of her dress, the latter was the case. At the expense of Alfred, her corpse was removed to Bishopthorpe, and interred in the churchyard of that village. Her aunt did not long survive her, and they lie in one grave.

THE DESIRE OF SOCIETY.

ABSTRACTING from those affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led by a natural and instinctive desire to associate with our species. This principle is easily discernible in the minds of children long before the dawn of reason. "Attend only," says an intelligent and accurate observer, "to the eyes, the features, and the gestures of a child on the breast, when another child is presented to it; both instantly, previous to the possibility of instruction or habit, exhibit the most evident expressions of joy. Their eyes sparkle, and their features and gestures demonstrate, in the most unequivocal manner, a mutual attachment. When farther advanced, children who are strangers to each other, though their social appetite be equally strong, discover a mutual shyness of approach, which, however, is soon conquered by the more powerful instinct of association*.

In the lower animals, too, very evident traces of the same instinct appear. In some of these we observe a species of union strikingly analogous to political associations among men: in others we observe occasional unions among individuals to accomplish a particular purpose,—to repel, for example, a hostile assault;—but there are also various tribes which discover a desire of society, and a pleasure in the company of their own species, without an apparent reference to any farther end. Thus we frequently see horses, when confined alone in an enclosure, neglect their food, and break the fences to join their companions in the contiguous field. Every person must have remarked the spirit and alacrity with which this animal exerts himself on the road, when accompanied by another animal of his own species, in comparison of what he discovers when travelling alone; and with respect to oxen and cows, it has been asserted, that even in the finest pasture they do not fatten so rapidly in a solitary state as when they feed

* Smellie's Philosophy of Natural History.

together in a herd. What is the final cause of the associating instinct in such animals as have now been mentioned, it is not easy to conjecture, unless we suppose that it was intended merely to augment the sum of their enjoyments. But whatever opinion we may form on this point, it is indisputable that the instinctive determination is a strong one, and that it produces striking effects on the habits of the animal, even when external circumstances are the most unfavourable to its operation. Horses and oxen, for example, when deprived of companions of their own species, associate and become attached to each other. The same thing sometimes happens between individuals that belong to tribes naturally hostile, as between dogs and cats, or between a cat and a bird. "Were I in a desert," says an author, "I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections. If I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself to; I would court their shade, and greet them kindly for their protection. I would cut my name upon them, and swear they were the loveliest trees throughout the desert. If their leaves withered, I would teach myself to mourn, and when they rejoiced, I would rejoice along with them."

The Count de Lauzun was confined by Louis XIV. for nine years in the Castle of Pignerol, in a small room where no light could enter but from a chink in the roof. In this solitude he attached himself to a spider, and contrived for some time to amuse himself with attempting to tame it, with catching flies for its support, and with superintending the progress of its web. The jailor discovered his amusement, and killed the spider; and the Count used afterwards to declare that the pang he felt on the occasion could be compared only to that of a mother for the loss of a child. So just is the simple and beautiful statement of the fact given by Montesquieu, "That man is born in society, and there he remains."—*Stewart's Active and Moral Powers.*

THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB.

A POPULAR FALLACY.

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors, in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long since. Hail, candle-light!—without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindest luminary of the three; if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon! We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep by candle-light. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage, unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated fastnesses!—they must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a sombre cast (try Hesiod or Ossian), derived from the tradition of those unlighted nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin—if they had any. How did they sup? What a melange of chance carving they must have made of it!—here one had got a leg of a goat, when he wanted a horse's shoulder—there another had dipt his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right mare's milk.—There is neither good eating nor drinking in fresco. Who, even in these civilised times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk, and waited for the flavour till the lights came? The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell

pork from veal in the dark? or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga? Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking—but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs!—how he burnishes! There is absolutely no such thing as reading, but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day, in gardens, and in sultry arbours; but it was labour thrown away. Those gay notes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing, like so many coquets, that will have you all to their self, and are jealous of your abstractions. By the midnight taper the writer digests his meditations.

By the same light we must approach to their perusal, if we would catch the flame, the odour. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works—

Things that were born when none but the still night,
And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes.

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn on Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight; and Taylor's richer description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourself, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best-measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors;" or the wild sweep of winds at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted courts our endeavours. We would indite something about the Solar System—*Betty, bring the candles.*—CHARLES LAMB.

HOMES AND GRAVES.

How beautiful a world were ours,
But for the pale and shadowy One
That treadeth in its pleasant dowers,
And stalketh in its sun!
Glad childhood needs the lore of time
To show the phantom overhead;
But where the breast, before its prime,
That carrieth not its dead?
The moon that looketh on whose home
In all its circuit sees no tomb?

It was an ancient tyrant thought
To link the living with the dead;—
Some secret of his soul had taught
That lesson dark and dread!
And, oh! we bear about us still
The dreary moral of his art:—
Some form that lieth, pale and chill,
Upon each living heart,
Tied to the memory, till a wave
Shall lay them in one common grave!

To boyhood hope—to manhood fears!—
Alas! alas! that each bright home
Should be a nursing-place of tears—
A cradle for the tomb!—
If childhood seeth all things loved
Where home's unshadowy shadows wave
The old man's treasure hath removed—
He looketh to the grave!—
For grave and home lie sadly blent,
Wherever spreads yon firmament.

A few short years—and then the boy
Shall miss, beside the household hearth,
Some treasure from his store of joy,
To find it not on earth :—
A shade within its sadden'd walls
Shall sit, in some beloved's room,
And one dear name he vainly calls
Be written on a tomb ;
And he have learnt, from all beneath,
His first, dread, bitter taste of death !

And years glide on, till manhood's come ;
And where the young, glad faces were,
Perchance the once bright, happy home
Hath many a vacant chair :—
A darkness, from the churchyard shed,
Hath fallen on each familiar room ;
And much of all home's light hath fled,
To smoulder in the tomb ;
And household gifts, that memory saves,
But help to count the household graves.

Then homes and graves the heart divide,
As they divide the outer world ;
But drearier days must yet betide,
Ere sorrow's wings be fur'd ;
When more within the churchyard lie
Than sit and sadly smile at home ;
Till home, unto the old man's eye,
Itself appears a tomb,
And his tried spirit asks the grave
For all the home it longs to have !

It shall be so—it shall be so !—
Go bravely trusting, trusting on ;
Bear up a few short years—and lo !
The grave and home are one !—
And then the bright ones gone before,
Within another happier home,
Are waiting, fonder than before,
Until the old man come :—
A home where but the life-trees wave
Like childhood's—it hath not a grave !

From "Friendship's Offering," by T. K. HERVEY.

THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.

BY G. FLETCHER, A COMPOSITOR.

I CALL'd on Beauty: and the Spirit fine
Came golden-robed: not e'en summer eve,
When glory flashes down from Phebus' shrine.
Shows hues more glowing: matchless skill did weave
The Shape's apparel: like itself divine,
Its garments seem'd. My faint heart did cleave
Against my breast. I gazed: I had not dream'd;
A seraph form was there, that angel-woman seem'd.

The Shape was naked upward from the waist.
The limbs were delicate: no earthly taint
Could have entinged them. Holy, mild, and chaste.
And pure as the sweet shadow of a saint,
Appear'd the Semblance: Heaven's hand had traced
Framework and lineament. To my plaint,
The Form came floating down from Eden's bowers,
In glorious guise—all sunshine and all flowers.

And in its hand it bore an Ivory Lyre,
Of shape antique, with carving quaint and rare ;
The which, restrung with shining golden wire,
The Phantom woke. Oh, sounds beyond compare !
Notes, that alone are breathed by heavenly quire,
My ears drank in—waves, that would drown despair,
Rush'd o'er my soul. I listen'd and I wept,
As the heart-thrilling chords the angel-minstrel swept.

The strain then ceased. Gentle accents broke
(Music and love in silver heart-tones blent)
From its sweet lips. Thus the Shadow spoke :—
"Earth-born ! to greet thy summons I am sent.
Thou breathest my name, and from its cloud awoke
The halo which thy early manhood lent
To all around thee. Once, in that fair light,
The world a heaven seem'd, and man an angel bright.

"But sin and sorrow came. Thy green hopes died—
By sorrow autumn'd, falsehood winter'd them—
They fell, sepulchred in their wither'd pride,
In the heart's tomb—casket of many a gem,
More beautiful than stars, robes of a bride.
Such are first feelings—to love, and not condemn
Man's erring brother: to think him good as fair,
Till falsehood's blight shall strew the heart-leaves bare.

"I am the Spirit of the buried Past:
Beauty my name—the fleet embodiment
Of early dreams; too fondly loved to last
Man's constant dweller. I am earth-ward sent,
On his despairing heart heaven's dew to cast
His soul to thrill with this sweet instrument.
What lyre like this can equal passion move ?
Music of Eden born—of universal love.

"Floating unseen, I wander the wide earth ;
Brighten its poetry—the blushing flowers ;
At death-beds linger; or the blessed birth
Of a young Christian. Vale and towers
Alike I traverse. In homes of quiet worth
My harp is sounding—hymning all the hours
Beauty roves limitless—'tis everywhere ;
Its lute is love—it bows to spell of prayer.

"Be thou but good, I'll dwell with thee all day,
And tend the couch of thee and thine at night ;
And thou shalt bide beneath the blessed ray
Of hope, that fill'd thy first hours with delight.
And as thou seest thy fellow-mortals stray,
Think not to plume thee on thy moral might.
Thou might'st, like them, rove on sin's dangerous land.
Be good, but meek, nor break faith's potent wand.

"If thou'rt content, thy dwelling will become
A happy homestead yet for thee and thine,
And sanctified—if 'neath its humble dome
Thou breathest humble prayers to Him divine,
The Ruler of the Stars. I may not longer roam,
By mortal seen. If virtue thee incline
To her pure counsels, I shall for aye be near ;
My harp, too, ever sound its music in thine ear."

The Form then vanish'd like a fading cloud :
Its soft voice ling'ring as a flower's breath—
Perfuming silence, while the senses bow'd
Themselves to Beauty. The still calm of death
Seem'd o'er my household: e'en the air was proud—
At least I deem'd so in my earnest faith—
As if it wafted in its arms unseen
A Shape whose presence heaven-blest had been.

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